### Seeing a doctor, specialist or health professional glossary

This information has been drawn from a range of healthcare and government websites.

#### 1. Adverse or allergic reaction:
A bad reaction to a medication. For example, this can be headache, nausea, dizziness or a skin rash. You need to tell your GP if you had an adverse or allergic reaction to a medication that you have taken in the past.

#### 2. Allied Health:
Allied Health professions are health care jobs such as physiotherapists, social workers, speech therapists, or occupational therapists. They require university qualifications. This term does not include nurses, doctors, dentists and pharmacists.

#### 3. Appointment:
Means agreeing to meet someone, like a GP, at a certain time and place. In Australia it is important to make an appointment and to arrive on time for the appointment. If you cannot attend the appointment, you must phone and cancel it.

#### 4. Bulk billing:
Means the service is free for you because the GP will receive money straight from the government. You can ask if a doctor ‘bulk bills’ when you make the appointment.
### Chemist/pharmacy:
A shop where you can buy medicines and other health products. You can also ask for free advice about minor injuries or illnesses. Sometimes you will need a prescription for medicines; some medicines you can buy ‘over-the-counter’ (without a prescription).

### Complementary medicine or therapies:
Treat the whole person, not just the symptoms of their disease. They are used alongside conventional medical treatments to help improve a person’s health and wellbeing. Examples include acupuncture, aromatherapy, traditional Chinese medicine, herbal medicine and massage. Always let your doctor know if you are using a complementary therapy as it may interfere with medication they are prescribing for you.

### Confidentiality:
This means that the information you give to a healthcare professional is private. The healthcare professional must get your agreement before sharing the information with anyone. They need your permission ('consent') to share your information.

### Diagnosis:
The identification of an illness or other problem (see also 'assessment').

### Disclosure:
The act of making something known, especially new or private information.
### 10. Medicare ‘gap’:

The ‘gap’ is the amount you must pay yourself for medical or hospital charges on top of what you get back from Medicare or your private health insurer.

### 11. Generic medicine:

Is identical to a ‘brand name’ medicine. It contains the same active ingredient but is sold under a different name and is cheaper. Generic medicines can only be sold in Australia if they meet the same strict standards of quality, safety and effectiveness as the brand name medicines.

### 12. General Practitioner/ GP:

Family doctors in Australia are also called General Practitioners (GP). Some doctors work in health centres and hospitals and some work in their own offices. All GPs have university degrees. You can make your own appointment with the GP when you are sick or feeling unwell, or if you want a health check-up to make sure you don’t have any health problems. If unable to attend an appointment, you must phone and cancel it.

### 13. Helpline:

A helpline is a telephone service that offers help to those who call. Many helpline services offer more than telephone support - offering access to information, advice via telephone, email, web or SMS. A helpline can provide emotional support to a person in distress (Lifeline 13 11 14).

### 14. Immunisation/ Vaccination:
Medicines, given to children and adults, usually by injection, to prevent them from getting diseases. Immunisation protects against harmful infections before coming into contact with them. Immunisation uses the body’s natural defence mechanism - the immune response - to build resistance to specific infections. ‘Immunisation’ is the term used to describe two things: getting a vaccine and then becoming immune to the disease as a result of this vaccine.

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<tr>
<th>15. Medical certificate / Medical Leave cover note:</th>
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<td>If you work and you get sick, you need to let your employer know. You will need to provide a medical certificate (from your doctor or the hospital) to prove that you are unwell and to say how long it will take before you can return to work. Workplaces have different rules about when a medical certificate is needed, so you need to check in your employment contract or with your employer.</td>
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<th>16. Medical/Health history:</th>
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<tr>
<td>The information you provide about your health in the past, to help establish a diagnosis and develop a treatment plan. You can provide it to your doctor yourself, or they can obtain it from a previous doctor (with your permission).</td>
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<tr>
<th>17. Medicare Card:</th>
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<td>This card gives you access to free or low-cost medical services, such as GP appointments, X-Rays, blood tests, and free treatment in a public hospital. It is issued by the government and can also be used when buying prescription medications in pharmacies.</td>
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<td>18. Medication/ medicine:</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Over-the-counter medication:</td>
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<td>20. Pathology:</td>
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<td>21. Physiotherapist:</td>
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<td>22. Podiatrist:</td>
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<td>23. Prescription medication:</td>
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| **Primary Healthcare:** | **24. Primary Healthcare:**  
A broad range of health services provided by medical professionals in the community. They are the first contact a person has with the health system when they have a problem. They can be accessed without a referral. For instance, your General Practitioner (GP) is a Primary Healthcare provider and so are nurses, pharmacists and allied health providers like dentists. |
| **Radiologist** | **25. Radiologist**  
A medical professional who specialises in using medical imaging technologies (X-ray, MRI, ultrasound) to diagnose and treat injury and disease. |
| **Referral:** | **26. Referral:**  
A letter from your doctor to a specialist asking for an appointment for you. If the referral is to a specialist in a public hospital, the hospital will contact you to make an appointment. If it is to a private specialist, you will need to make the appointment yourself. |
| **Second opinion:** | **27. Second opinion:**  
You have the right to ask a doctor for another opinion if you are unsure about the medical treatment they suggest or about their diagnosis. You can ask your doctor to give you a referral to another doctor or medical specialist. You can ask your doctor to send the other medical practitioner any test results or medical history. |
### 28. Specialist:

A doctor that has done extra training in a certain area of medicine. For instance, this can be a cardiologist (heart doctor) or dermatologist (skin doctor) or psychiatrist (mental health doctor).

### 29. Symptom:

A sign or indication of something, for instance an illness or other problem with your health.

### 30. Treatment:

Medical care given for an illness or injury.